

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 IO-13 EB-07 /081 W

-----120824Z 014429 /12

R 120557Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8057

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 0806

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJECT: AN MFA OFFICIAL'S VIEW OF HIS MINISTRY'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, THAI FOREIGN RELATIONS, THE THAI INSURGENCY

REF: (A) 76 BANGKOK 31829 (NOTAL) (B) KUALA LUMPUR 0211 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION JAN 10 MFA OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFFS THAT FORMER UNDERSECRETARY ANAN PANYARACHUN IS DISCOURAGED ABOUT THE HANDLING OF CHARGES AGAINST HIM. ALTHOUGH COMMITTEE HAS CLEARED HIM OF CHARGES, GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ANNOUNCED DECISION. MFA WAS OFTEN NOT PRIVY TO INFORMATION ON MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN LEADERS, SUCH AS MALAYSIAN GENERAL ISMAIL'S VISIT TO BANGKOK, THAI MILITARY FIGURES BEHIND RTG REMAIN SUSPICIOUS OF MFA, ALTHOUGH FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR THANAT KHOMAN IS BEGINNING TO AGREE THAT THAILAND MUST INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS
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TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. MFA OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT RTG SHOULD NOT EXAGGERATE COMMUNIST THREAT BECAUSE PRONOUNCEMENTS ONLY SERVED TO DESTROY CONFIDENCE OF THE CITIZENS AND DISRUPT THE ECONOMY. MFA OFFICIAL SAID U.S. SHOULD URGE THAI MILITARY LEADERS TO CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING FIELD LEADERSHIP AND JUNGLE WARFARE TECHNIQUE RATHER THAN PURCHASING SOPHISTICATED

WEAPONRY INAPPROPRIATE TO AN INSURGENCY SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION ON JAN 10, SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS RE PRESENT SITUATION AT HIS MINISTRY, THAI FOREIGN RELATIONS, THE INSURGENCY AND THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT:

2. MFA - ALTHOUGH HE HAD HOPED FOR A FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT SOON, THE OFFICIAL WAS TOLD HE MUST REMAIN AT THE MINISTRY TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY DURING THIS PERIOD OF MANY PERSONNEL CHANGES. CABINET ON JAN 5 DECIDED ON SEVERAL AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS, BUT NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED TO PRESS, AS HAD BEEN THE PREVIOUS PRACTICE, BECAUSE AGREEMENT HAD NOT YET BEEN OBTAINED FROM COUNTRIES CONCERNED. HE NOTED THAT IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN EMBARRASSING TO MFA WHEN, IN THE PAST, APPOINTMENTS WOULD BE ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE RECEIVING COUNTRY HAD HAD A CHANCE TO REACT.

3. MFA OFFICIAL EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT FORMER UNDERSECRETARY ANAN PANYARACHUN WAS BEING KEPT IN LIMBO REGARDING HIS FUTURE. ALTHOUGH THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE HAD CLEARED ANAN OF CHARGES THAT HE PASSED CLASSIFIED INFORMATION TO THE NSCT, THE RTG HAD YET TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT CONFIRMING THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION. HE CONSIDERED IT A SHAME TO LOSE A MAN OF ANAN'S EXPERIENCE TO THE THAI FOREIGN SERVICE, BUT SAID THAT ANAN WAS "FED UP" WITH THE WAY HE HAS BEEN TREATED AND WOULD PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO FIND A POSITION WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. ASKED WHAT JOB ANAN COULD POSSIBLY FILL IN THAILAND
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THAT WOULD NOT IN ANY CASE BE A COME-DOWN FROM HIS PREVIOUS POSITIONS, THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE COULD BE MADE A FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THE GOVERNMENT PROBABLY WOULD NOT TAKE SUCH A STEP. THE OFFICIAL THEN COMMENTED THAT THE MILITARY BEHIND THE RTG "CONSIDER US (MFS) ALL COMMUNISTS".

4. TRAVEL PLANS OF PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER- ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL, PM THANIN WILL SOON TRAVEL TO JAPAN AND KOREA, AND FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT WILL GO TO BURMA AND INDONESIA. UNDERSECRETARY WONG PLANS TO VISIT VIENTIANE NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS AIR RIGHTS (SEE SEPTTEL). WHEN QUERIED ABOUT WHETHER SOLVING AIR RIGHTS QUESTION WOULD BE A STEP TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH LAOS AND EXCHANGING EMBASSIES WITH VIET-NAM, OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT HE HOPED SO. PRESENT EXCHANGES OF PROTEST NOTES BETWEEN LAOS AND THAILAND RE BORDER VIOLATIONS HAD BECOME A SORT OF UNNECESSARY GAME BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND EVEN THANAT KHOMAN WAS COMING AROUND TO UNDERSTAND THAT

THAILAND MUST INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH COMMUNISTS NEIGHBORS.

5. RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA - THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH PM THANIN HAD SAID SIGNING A NEW BORDER AGREEMENT WITH MALAYSIA WAS UNNECESSARY, BOTH COUNTRIES HAD MADE A PUBLIC COMMITMENT THAT AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED, AND ONE SHOULD BE SIGNED. ASKED WHETHER BORDER AGREEMENT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING MALAYSIAN ARMED FORCES STAFF GENERAL RAN SRI IBRAHIM BIN ISMAIL'S VISIT WITH GENERAL KRIANGSAK (REF B), MFA OFFICIAL ADMITTED THAT MFA WAS NOT PRIVY TO INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT OCCURRED DURING VISIT. HE PRESUMED, HOWEVER, THAT JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SOUTH THAILAND HAD BEEN TOPIC OF MEETING AND NOTED THAT RTG HAS LITTLE CONTROL OVER POPULATION IN THE SOUTH. HE SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE HAS RELATIVES IN HAD YAI WHO ARE IN MINING ENTERPRISE. EVEN THEY MUST PAY PROTECTION MONEY
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TO DISSIDENTS (HE DIDN'T MAKE CLEAR WHICH DISSIDENTS WERE INVOLVED) IN ORDER TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS.

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

6. MILITARY PRONOUNCEMENTS - OFFICIAL WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE THAI MILITARY RISKS MAKING MANY PROBLEMS FOR ITSELF WITH PRONOUNCEMENTS RE THE COMMUNIST THREAT AND POSSIBILITIES OF COMMUNIST INVASION. HE FELT THAT IF THE RTG WASN'T CAREFUL, IT WOULD CREATE PANIC AMONG THE CITIZENRY AND DISRUPTION OF THE ECONOMY. THE MFA HAS, SINCE OCTOBER, BEEN ISSUING A RECORD NUMBER OF PASSPORTS -- BETWEEN 1000 AND 1200 PER MONTH -- WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE AN INDICATION THAT PEOPLE ARE PREARING OPTIONS FOR DEPARTING WHAT COULD BE A SINKING SHIP. HE NOTED THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT FORMER PM KHUKRIT PRAMOT WAS THE ONLY CIVILIAN WITH ENOUGH STATUS AND POLITICAL SENSE TO BRING COHESION TO THE PRESENT REGIME. ALTHOUGH KHUKRIT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO KKEP THE WARRING FACTIONS OF HIS MULTI-PARTY GOVERNMENT TOGETHER IN 1975-76, HE REMAINED THE BEST CHOICE FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP EVEN IN THE PRESENT PERIOD OF A
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MILITARY-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT.

7. HE THEN CONTINUED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, RATHER THAN EXAGGERATING THE COMMUNIST THREAT AND CALLING FOR THE PURCHASE OF SOPHISTICATED, EXPENSIVE WEAPONRY, SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE FIELD AND TRAINING EFFECTIVE JUNGLE FIGHTERS. THE MFA HAD BEEN CRITICIZED BECAUSE ITS GUARD STAFF CARRIED OLD WEAPONS AND "LOOKS BAD IN PARADES". THE OFFICIAL COMMENTED THAT WHATEVER M-16S THE RTG HAS SHOULD GO TO FIELD SOLDIERS, NOT TO PALACE OR GOVERNMENT OFFICE GUARDS. HE URGED THAT THE U.S. ADVISE THE THAI MILITARY LEADERSHIP AGAINST PURCHASING FANCY ARMAMENTS INAPPROPRIATE TO THAILAND'S INSURGENCY PROBLEMS. HE THAN NOTED THAT ADMIRAL WEISNER WAS IN TOWN AND QUESTIONED THE PURPOSE AND TIMING OF HIS VISIT. EMBOFFS REPLIED THAT THE ADMIRAL WAS NEWLY-APPOINTED TO THE CINCPAC COMMAND AND WAS MAKING INTRODUCTORY CALLS ON RTG OFFICIALS. SOURCE SAID THAT, GIVEN U.S. EXPERIENCE IN VIET-NAM, HIGHT-RANKING U.S. MILITARY SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINC THAILAND'S MILITARY THAT IT NEEDS TO IMPROVE ARMY FIELD LEADERSHIP AND INCREASE ITS ABILITY TO PROTECT THAI PEOPLE RATHER THAN PURCHASE FAST AIRCRAFT. THEE WAS ALSO DEFINITE HINT THAT U.S. SHOULD NOT INCLUDE WEAPONS INAPPROPRIATE TO JUNGLE FIGHTING IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, EVEN IF PRESENT MILITARY LEADERS MAKE THAT SORT OF REQUEST. UPON RETURNING TO MFA, EMBOFFS AND OFFICIAL DROVE PAST DEFENSE MINISTRY

WHICH WAS FLYING, PRESUMABLY IN HONOR OF CINCPAC VISIT,
LARGE THAI AND U.S. FLAGS AT GATES. COMMENT WAS THAT SUCH
PRACTICE WAS UNUSUAL AND PERHAPS INCORRECT, "BUT OF COURSE,
THEY DIDN'T ASK THE MFA'S OPINION.Z
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, POLITICAL STABILITY, PARAMILITARY FORCES, FOREIGN RELATIONS, ALLEGATIONS, CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO00806
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770011-0663
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770161/aaaacasi.tel
Line Count: 229
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BANGKOK 31829, 77 KUALA LUMPUR 211
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3620724
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AN MFA OFFICIAL'S VIEW OF HIS MINISTRY'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, THAI FOREIGN RELATIONS, THE THAI INSURGENCY
TAGS: PFOR, TH, (ANAN PANYARACHUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e2022fdb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009